

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes - Final

February 21, 2007

In Attendance: Sheri Baron, Marlissa Briggett, Joseph Curro, Mahendra Desai, Christine Deshler, A. Nick Minton, Nancy Rhoads, Marlene Schultz, Bill Shea

Absent: Christine Carney, Nancy Sweeney

Citizens Open Forum – An Arlington parent came to express her feelings of discrimination from an incident at the Brackett School on February 1st. She organized a gay family support program that she wanted published. She wrote and announcement notice for the school paper and it was rejected. When she questioned the principal as to why the announcement was not published the principal related that the superintendent stated the message did not apply to a school event even though it does apply to children. Six families have expressed interest in the program.

Commissioners suggested she inquire to the principal for some written guidelines for this newsletter. A subcommittee with Marlissa Briggett, Marlene Schultz, Bill Shea (Chair) and Joe Curro (Alternate) has been formed to see if we have jurisdiction and start the process. The superintendent's office will also be called to inquire if there are any written guidelines for these publications.

2. Arlington Teosinte Sister City Project Request – timing issues cancelled their meeting with the commission for tonight

3. Review Minutes for January – accepted as amended

4. Vacancy - Joe Curro has contacted Mr. Worden by e-mail regarding a replacement for Arif Khan – suggestion to advertise on web for interested candidates – a move was made to send a postcard to all who expressed interest to survey – Marylynn will do this - Joe Curro has volunteered to write an article for the Advocate.

Absences - concern regarding absenteeism at regular monthly meetings
- no decision made on this discussion

5. No Place For Hate – Five members attended the February 6 meeting at the APD – Lt. Hughes has asked the commission to assist screening people to be a part of the NPFH committee – after much discussion of the meeting and request – it was decided that the commission should not be the ones to pick the committee but maybe make recommendations and then step back. This is not an AHRC program but we will work with the APD and be supportive. Sheri Baron will check into how other towns are working the program.

6. Incidents and Complaints –

#1 – Discrimination complaint against the APD does not regard the AHRC

at this time -

#2 – Brattle Street incident – Joe Curro followed up with phone call and has had no response

#3 – AHS basketball game incident – Bill Shea and Joe Curro met with the Somerville alderman – discussed that it was particularly upsetting that at the time nobody did anything about it – Mr. Skidmore called Somerville alderman who raised the complaint – request for a copy of the videotape of the game has been requested – Joe has spoken with some school committee members, who believe this is isolated to a few individuals - Bill Shea suggested inviting Doug Hastings to our next meeting to discuss his opinion on the incident –

7. Visit to School Committee and Health and Human Services Director - Joe Curro will make arrangement to meet with the School Committee on 2/27 or 3/13 – Nancy Rhoads and he will work on the agenda – we should have only 3-4 items – and be very clear about them.

Christine Connolly will be our guest at the March monthly meeting.

8. Diversity Training - Nancy Rhoads will continue to look into at least two more bids - Joe Curro will contact Public Conversations Project in Cambridge - Arlington citizens are our customer - this is a customer service - what can we do - we need goals and participation - we need to have someone that will work on a business level without a threat - more discussion next meeting.

9. **Budget** – Bill Shea will speak with John Kneeland to seek more funding in our budget - more discussion next meeting.

A motion was made a motion to reimburse payment of costs incurred for AHRC domain charges - approved

A motion to fund incidental gifts from the Commission budget was voted down. Several members voiced support for continuing the practice of funding such items through individual freewill offerings.

10. **Subcommittee Report** –

Dialogues - still working on previous suggestions: Understanding Islam, Special Education, Talking with Kids About Racism - tabled

Schools - Nancy Rhoads did follow up with Supt. Levenson but still no response - if an appointment can be schedule Joe Curro will go with her.

Rapid Response/Publicity - Sheri Baron updated commissioners on her meeting with Chief Ryan.

11. **Other Business** - there is a question regarding land disposition at Symmes
- there appears to be discrimination in a by-law - John Maher will be contacted to clarify this issue - tabled.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM

Next monthly meeting is Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Prepared and submitted by:

Marylynn Carnell

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